

Remarks

Claims 1-7 and 9-10 are pending in this application. Claims 1-5 and 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Trader et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,832,432). Claims 6 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Trader et al. in view of Holm et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,850,629). Claim 10 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Trader et al. in view of Pearson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,114,939).

Claim 1 recites a method for converting text to concatenated voice by utilizing a digital voice library and a set of playback rules. The digital voice library includes a plurality of speech items and a corresponding plurality of voice recordings. Each speech item corresponds to at least one available voice recording. The method comprises receiving text data, and expanding the text data to form a sequence of text and pseudo words. The method further comprises converting the sequence of text and pseudo words into a sequence of speech items in accordance with the digital voice library. The method further comprises converting the sequence of speech items into a sequence of voice recordings in accordance with the set of playback rules. Voice data is generated based on the sequence of voice recordings by concatenating adjacent recordings in the sequence of voice recordings.

As further related in claim 1, the plurality of speech items includes a plurality of phrases. Converting the sequence of text and pseudo words further includes parsing the sequence of text and pseudo words to determine any phrases.

Trader fails to anticipate the claimed invention. Trader describes a method for converting a text classified ad to a natural sounding audio ad. According to Trader, ads from a print media ad database are downloaded to a host processor that identifies relevant ads and converts the abbreviated text of the print ad to an expanded version of the ad. The words and phrases of the expanded version are parsed and stored in appropriate fields of a relational database. A sequenced play list of audio file numbers corresponding to the words and phrases

contained in a database record is created along with glue words and phrases that are added to produce a more natural sounding audio.

According to Trader, as exemplified in Figure 2, the text in the relational database is matched with words in an ad vocabulary table as depicted at blocks 62 and 64. The table 64 identifies numbered audio files stored in subsystem 24 (Fig. 1). The sequenced list of audio files is created at block 66.

According to Trader, ad words are matched against words in the ad vocabulary. This approach does not anticipate the claimed invention. Trader does describe an approach to expansion as well as a sequenced play list. This does not anticipate the claimed invention.

According to claim 1, the text data is received and expanded. Specifically, the sequence of text and pseudo words is converted into a sequence of speech items in accordance with the digital voice library, the sequence of speech items is converted into a sequence of voice recordings in accordance with the set of playback rules, and the voice data is generated based on the sequence of voice recordings by concatenating adjacent recordings.

It must be appreciated that the approach recited by claim 1 involves several levels of abstraction including the expansion of the text data, the conversion to the sequence of speech items, and then the conversion to the sequence of voice recordings, followed by the concatenating of adjacent recordings. In this way, the digital voice library and the set of playback rules critically affect the process between the text data and the voice data, as the digital voice library affects conversion of text to speech items while the playback rules affect conversion of the speech items to voice recordings. Trader does not anticipate the digital voice library and playback rules in the combination recited by claim 1.

The approach of the invention is far different than Trader which matches ad words against an ad vocabulary. More specifically, Trader is simply matching words to audio files and generating a play list. This is far different, and far less involved, than the claimed

invention. The invention is about more than matching words to audio files and playing a file sequence. According to the invention, text data is received, and processed in a sequence of specific actions with the final action being the generating of the voice data.

In the office action, the Examiner makes reference to Trader, blocks 60 and 62 (Fig. 2). As noted above, Trader is only matching words to numbered audio files and then creating a play list according to rules that insert glue words. Trader has significant shortcomings, and Trader fails to anticipate the claimed invention.

For the reasons given above, claims 1-7 and 9-10 are believed to be patentable.

Respectfully submitted,

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